

DAILY SENTINEL

TUESDAY MORNING, JULY 18
FROM THE MISSOURI TO THE PACIFIC.

Brigham Young and the Latter Day Saints—The New Tabernacle—Preaching—Brigham's Ideas on Religion—The Sabbath—Gold Mining—Polygamy—A Spiritual Discussion.

[From Special Correspondence N. Y. Tribune.]
GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, Utah,
June 18, 1866.

Brigham Young has never called upon strangers, whether public officers or private citizens, until they first pay their respects to him. But Mr. Colfax declining to give the initial visit, on Wednesday morning, Brigham Young, Heber Kimball and eight or ten other conspicuous Latter Day Saints, made a call of two hours upon the Speaker and his party at the Salt Lake Hotel. The conversation was long and rambling. It gave a few detached portions, not complete in their order, but, I think, with substantial correctness and fairness.

Mr. Colfax—How large is the new tabernacle which you are erecting this summer?
Brigham Young—100 feet by 250. It will seat 6,000 or 10,000. The sides will be entirely open for ventilation during the warm season.
Colfax—We have decided to remain over next Sabbath, hoping to hear you preach on some point to learn more about the doctrine of your church from the highest authority.

Brigham—I am surprised that you have not learned before. But, educated as you have been, you said: "It is only a new religion, a fresh form of religious fanaticism."

O—That is merely your assumption. Who are authorized to preach among you?

B—Everybody who is ordained. We set law, yea, farmers, mechanics—all who have the gift—to preaching. I suppose we have more languages among us than any other community in the world. In the congregation next Sunday I could probably call up fifty men who would all preach good sermons in as many different languages.

O—Then you certainly ought to be good talkers.

B—You must judge of that. [Laughter.] If any one of you are religiously inclined we shall be glad to have you occupy a part of the day on Sunday. Do not come to you preach?

O—I think not. I fear we have not any religion to speak of.

B—(Very emphatically.) I have.

O—Then we certainly hope to hear you speak of it—in the tabernacle.

B—Men talk a great deal about the mystery of God, when they know nothing about it. Nothing about it. Religion must display itself in the life. I have dealt largely with the people here of all classes—Indians and whites, Latter Day Saints and others. If I have ever wronged any man, let him come forward and I will restore it four fold.

O—That is the religion I believe in—the religion of daily life—of justice, charity and love. But, of course, there is one feature of your system from which we entirely dissent, and which we do not consider religion.

B—You mean plurality of wives? We have no more delicacy in talking about that than any other topic.

O—I have read in one of the old writers—St. Augustine, I think—that it is better to converse of the things about which we agree than of those upon which we differ.

B—Yes, in social intercourse.

Brigham—The rebels always seemed to me like pampered children, who, after having all the cakes and candy whistles, finally in a peck began to kick their father and mother and declared they would set up for themselves. We of the North always supported them. I knew they could not sustain themselves, and now they have proved it.

I have always discouraged, our people from trying to find gold. It is the greatest curse of any country. Every dollar taken out by the United States has cost \$100. It produces anarchy, murder, theft, vigilance committees, and infidelity. If we in Utah were to enact the lawless customs which are common to all these countries, the troops would be sent out against us at once.

Colfax—If you do not dig the gold there, why do you think God put it in the mountains?

B—That the people might show just what they have shown—their own folly. If I could perform the miracles—if my faith was sufficient—I would seal up all the gold mines, and keep them sealed.

During this desultory talk, Brigham strongly intimated that the success and prosperity of his people were miraculous. He twice repeated that they cannot be annihilated.

Yesterday we returned the call. He resides in the "President's Block," a handsome, nearly ten acres, containing the Tithing Office, Deseret News Office, school house for his own children, Lion House, with a lion couchant, out in sandstone, over the front door, Beehive House, which has been here since the first building for his domestic and business uses, and ample flower and fruit gardens. The whole is surrounded by a wall seven feet high of builders laid in mortar.

The porter in his high top or sentry box (where I think I saw a revolver hanging beside him), eyed us closely, but permitted us to pass, as we were accompanied by a leading Mormon, "President" Young, with several dignitaries of the church, received us in his large, airy office, with high walls, maps, photographs of prominent Latter Day Saints, a lithographic copy of Brigham's Sunlight and Shadow, scales for weighing gold dust, accounts books, and a few arm chairs. At first the conversation was heavy and rather formal, though Brigham gave us a good deal of information about farming, &c. Nothing can be raised without irrigation; but by the application of water the soil is very productive. Corn is a more uncertain crop than the small grains, but sixty bushels to the acre is a fair yield, and ninety have been produced. He once raised 934 bushels of wheat to the acre, and 90 bushels of oats are not uncommon. Many farmers have even raised out in winter, but they are from cold coal and iron around, but the iron has not yet been successfully smelted.

At last the discourse turned upon Polygamy. I asked him to give me a few facts, in which all present, on both sides, took a part. Brigham insisted that experience and history, both sacred and profane, justify it, and "posed" the scriptural members of our party by asking them to cite from the Bible, in support of prohibition. But when he admitted that even in Utah, as elsewhere, the births of males and females are about equal, he seemed a little staggered by Mr. Colfax's asking how he accounted for that fact if the Almighty designed more than one wife for each man.

Our Party—Is Polygamy a vital and inseparable part of your system?

Brigham—It is not in our Book of Commandments and Discipline. We do not believe in it, but in consequence with a revelation from God it was ordered to enter into Plurality. (The Mormons invariably use this word instead of Polygamy—Correspondent.) So were several of the other brethren, but for the Church at large it is a privilege rather than an obligation. Abuses of it sometimes occur which it is difficult to prevent. But we can point to the highest morality. We have not a house of prostitution. I don't believe you can find four illegitimate children in the Territory. You all think Plurality cannot last. Now tell us frankly how you expect it to be done away?

Colfax—Well, we expect you to have a new revelation prohibiting it. [Laughter.]

Brigham—We should not be sorry for that. If God ever so directs we shall be glad to do with it.

Colfax—Or there may be another revelation. You may do away with it by your own voluntary action, legally, peacefully, just as Missouri and Maryland abolished slavery.

Brigham—But if we did so it would be only the beginning. You could then demand that we give up the Book of Mormon, and next our Church organization.

Our Party—No, no! You would be tolerated in your faith just as Methodists, Presbyterians, and all other sects are. We have no right to interfere with your religion—only your practice when it violates the civil law.

A Mormon Elder—That infamous law against "Polygamy" strikes at our religious liberty and is unconstitutional.

Colfax—It certainly violates no section of the Constitution, and accords with the practice of all civilized nations.

Elder—What right had Congress to enact it? Our Party—The same it would have to interfere with a sect which, like South Sea Islanders should consider human sacrifices a religious duty.

or like our New England ancestors, should interpret the Scriptural injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," as requiring them to drown old women on the charge of witchcraft.

Brigham—The cases are not parallel. As I read His Word, God nowhere requires the taking of human life, except in the single case of his son, who was given as a sacrifice and atonement for all our sins. Beside, our system is entirely voluntary.

Our Party—True; but the comparison holds good inasmuch as your system consists with civilization and public morality. If you had a regulation requiring you, like Abraham, to sacrifice and slay your son, would you do it?

Elder—Yes, if convinced that it was a revelation from God.

Our Party—Well, just where the civil law would step in to restrain you. Now, will you answer a question as frankly as we have done? Do you expect Polygamy to spread throughout the nation and the world?

Brigham—That is known only to the God of Heaven. If, as we believe, our faith is the true one, it will continue to grow and flourish, and nothing can prevail against it. It is all in the hands of God.

Soon after the interview ended. Giving only fragmentary portions of it, I have endeavored to report the spirit, and, as far as space would allow, the words of its chief discussions. Its like never occurred before in the office of Brigham Young. I trust he will yet receive the new revelation!

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